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THE
PRINCIPLE
OF THE
Protestant Reformation
EXPLAIN'D
IN A
Letter of Resolution
CONCERNING
CHURCH-COMMUNION.



L O N D O N,

Printed in the Year 1704.

PRINTED BY

Protestant Reformation

AND

Letter of Abolition

OF

Madam,

LAST time I had the Honour to pay my Respect to your Ladyship in a Visit, you were pleased to demand an answer to this Question: *Is it necessary for a Christian Man to joyn himself publickly to some (one or other) Church Communion of Christians? Or, whether a Man might not be a good Christian, tho' he did not joyn himself in publick Communion with any Church?*

In answer to which, I would ask you what you think of the twelve Apostles of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, they all had Communion *i. e.* Conversation with *Christ* their Master. And his Conversation made all of them good Christians, excepting only one, and that one Disciple, *viz. Judas*, had as much Communion with the holy *Jesus* as the others had, and was present at the last Supper with all the rest, altho' in that same Night he betray'd his Master. From whence you may see that Communion with our Saviour *Christ* himself in Person, is not any certain Mark of a good Christian; but that which made eleven of the twelve Apostles good Christians, was *their receiving the Doctrine of Christ into their Hearts, and living up to it, &c.* that which made them good Christians will (I suppose) be sufficient to make you or me such.

When these twelve Apostles and the other Disciples were met together to hear their Master's Instruction, they were *indeed* his Church or Congregation; altho' we do not read that they were then call'd by that Name. For the first Congregation which was call'd a Church in the *New Testament*, was that number of Men to whom *St. Peter* preached, and who receiv'd his Doctrine concerning *Jesus Christ*, and were baptiz'd, as you read in *Acts 2. 41.* *Then they that gladly receiv'd his word were baptiz'd, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand Souls.* Now these three thousand Persons being added to the twelve Apostles, and the other 70 Disciples were the first Assembly to which the Name of Church is given in the *New Testament*, as you may read in the last Verse of the same Chapter, where 'tis said that *the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.*

Moreover, 'tis plain that the Design of our Lord *Jesus Christ* in calling twelve poor Jews to him, was that he might take an Opportunity to instruct them in his Law, which containeth a perfect

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Rule of Life, and upon their willing Submission of themselves to hear and learn this his *admirable Doctrine*, they might justly be stiled his Disciples; but having conformed their Lives to this most *excellent Institution*, they deserv'd the Name of good *Christians*; and upon the same Account, you or I, may deserve the same Name.

For suppose the late Agent from the Emperour of *Fez* and *Morocco*, who came to bargain with his late Majesty King *William* the III. for the Ransom of *English* Captives retained upon the Coast of *Barbary*, suppose he should have bin induced by our *Christian* behaviour to have desired Instruction in the Law of our Lord *Jesus*, and suppose that we had given him the *New Testament* translated into his own Mother Tongue, and supposing yet farther, that upon reading thereof he had taken such a good liking to the Doctrine therein contained, that he should have renounced the *Alcoran* of *Mahomet*, been baptiz'd, and also given himself up to the Gospel-Rule of Faith and Manners: certainly this Man ought hereupon to have been owned by us as a *Christian*, and if upon his return to *Morocco* he should persevere in his Conformity to the holy Gospel of our Saviour *Christ*, would he not be a good Christian, and such a one as *Christ* will own at the great day of Judgment, altho' there should not be one *Christian* Man left in the Empire of *Fez* for him to converse with? much less can there be any Church-Communion there, since we have redeemed our Captives.

Yet still I say that this Man ought to be owned by us as a Member of the universal Church of *Christ*, tho' there be not one *Christian* in all *Africa* besides himself. Neither has any National or Christian Church in *Europe*, *Asia* or *America*, any power vested in it to compel this Man unto a strict Communion with them, nor can any Church challenge any Authority over him; but he is still as much his own Man, and at his own disposal, as he was before he took up the *New Testament* into his Hand.

Nor can any Man, or number of Men claim Authority to impose his or their *Interpretations* of the holy Scripture upon his Belief; he is not bound to receive the Canons of the Council of *Trent*, nor the Articles or Homilies of the Church of *England*, nor the *Athanasian* Creed, nor that which we call the Apostles Creed; I say that neither one nor other of all these Doctrines or Disciplines is he as a Christian bound to receive, any otherwise than as he shall

shall find it contained in his *New Testament*. In short, suppose he will read no other religious Book but only his *Testament*, and will consult no Commentator thereon, but will only consider the plain Sense of it as he readeth, and make his own Collections from it. This Man may be thereby directed to lead a good Christian Life; and if he shall do so, he will (according to the Tenour of the Gospel) be certainly saved by the Merits of *Christ*, altho' no *Christian Church* should own him, or can lay any claim to him as a Member of her Communion.

Perhaps you may think that the national or particular Church in which he was baptiz'd may lay a claim to him; but then, 'twill be hard to find what Church this is. He was baptiz'd with Water, *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. But then it may be inquired, to what national or particular Church did this Form of Water-Baptism intitle him? For since all Christian Churches agree in the same Form, one Church can claim him no more than an other. Perhaps you will say that if he were baptiz'd in *London* by a Priest, of the Church of *England*, our *Church of England* may claim him as a Member of her Communion upon that score; but what if he had been baptiz'd by a Popish Priest? had he been obliged to have been a Papist? If a Midwife should baptize a Child, should that Child be obliged to be of the Midwife's Religion? 'Tis not the Qualification of the Baptizer, but the Form of Baptism, which can give Denomination to the Person baptized, and since this Man was baptized according to the Institution of our Lord *Christ*, he can from thence only be stiled a Christian. Nor is it commonly supposed that any Person in Baptism takes upon him any particular Profession of Faith, but only the Profession of the *Christian* Faith in general; nor can it therefore be supposed, that a Person by Baptism is made a Member of any particular Church, but only of the Christian Church universal.

Now, if you will allow this Man, whom we suppose to have been baptized according to our Saviour's Institution, as also to believe the Gospel, and lead his Life accordingly at *Morocco*, to be a good *Christian*, then it will appear that no particular Church-Communion is necessary to make a good *Christian*. And so your Question is answer'd, tho' it may be, not to your full Satisfaction.

For you will say, how can this Man be of the *Christian Church*,
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who is of no Church? And truly, I must hereupon confess to your Ladyship, that this Man, tho' a good *Christian*, is as yet no *Church-man*; as it may likewise so fall out, that a good *Church-man* may be no *Christian*, unless it be in name only. For what think you of *Edmund Bonner*, in *Queen Mary* the First's time, Bishop of *London*? Or what think you of any other persecuting Bishop, Priest, or Deacon? 'Tis apparent that nothing is more contrary to the *Christian* Principle, than Persecution for matter of Religion; and yet all sorts of Churchmen have, in their turns, favoured Persecution.

All that is commonly required to make a good Churchman is, to frequent the publick Offices of his Church. Nay, suppose a Man do's seldom join in the publick Church-Communion; yet if he promote the Interest of that Communion, or the Power of only the Clergy of that Communion, this Man shall be owned as a good Church-man, tho' he has not one Christian Virtue appearing in him: Which shews that a Church-man and a Christian may sometimes be two different things.

And upon the nearest View I could take of this matter, I could not perceive that *Church-manship* ever added any Advantage to the Character of a *Christian*; but it has sometimes been a diminution thereunto. For tho' the word *Church* has made a great noise in the World, insomuch that no Man is commonly counted a *Christian*, unless he profess himself a Member of some particular *Church*, yet if you look closely into the Nature of particular Churches, you will find that 'tis no great matter which distinguisheth one *Christian Church* from another. As for the *Roman* Communion, I take it to be *Anti-Christian*, and so shut out of this Question. But as for *Christian* Churches, who take the Gospel of our Lord *Jesus Christ* to be the only Rule of their Faith and Manners, what is it that can make one Church differ from another, unless it be distance of places in which religious Worship is publickly performed? And if this were all, it would be no matter of concern to what Congregation a Christian joined himself, since all Congregations would be of the same sort.

But you will say, that there are other things by which *Christian* Churches are said to differ from one another; such as different *Ceremonies*, different *Forms of Worship*, and different *Disciplines*. As the Church of *England* useth a Form of Worship, and of Discipline different.

different from the Churches of *Holland* and *Geneva*. But yet if you look upon *Ceremonies* as things in themselves indifferent, 'tis evident that a regard to any one sort of Ceremony, more than to another, can yield no Advantage to the Character of a *Christian*: So likewise if several Forms of Worship are all composed according to the same Gospel of our Lord, a *Christian* Man can find no great Advantage by preferring one before another. Nor can it be any matter of moment, whether I live under the Inspection of a Bishop, or of a Presbytery; tho' for the sake of my Ease and Freedom from Molestations, I should be inclined to join in Communion with that Church where only one Clergy-man beares rule in a Country, rather than with a Church wherein ten or more such Clergy have a Jurisdiction over the same District.

Hereby your Ladyship sees that there is no such distinguishing Mark in any particular Christian Church, for the sake whereof your Communion therewith is made *necessary*. You know that the Ceremonies of the Church of *England* are not *necessary* but *indifferent*, and so declared to be by the same Church. And it is not doubted but that a good Christian may save his Soul in *Holland* or *Geneva*, altho' their Forms of Worship and Discipline be different from ours; and therefore it cannot be *necessary* for a *Christian* to join himself in strict Communion to either of these Churches, or indeed to any one particular Church whatsoever.

And if the Character of a *Churchman* giveth so little Advantage to that of a *Christian*, it may from thence appear that no great publick Benefit is due to the Members of one Communion of *Christians* more than to another; I mean upon the account of their particular Communion. Nor is any publick Discouragement due to any *Christian* Man upon the score of his particular Christian Communion. And supposing the *Morocco* Agent before mentioned, should, upon his occasions, have communicated with all the Christian Churches in *Europe*, he would be so far from deserving the Discouragement of any particular Church; that he would thereby rather merit the good Will of them all.

Perhaps you will say, that all Clergy-men make it a *matter of great moment* to what Church a Christian Man joineth himself in constant Communion. And truly so it is a matter of great moment to them; for all Clergy-men are Shepherds either to a higher or
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lower degree, and doubtless the Increase of the Flock is, and ought to be the particular Concern of every Shepherd: But yet if all Shepherds discharge their Duty *as they ought to do*; and if the Pasture be all of the same sort, as spiritual Pastorage *ought to be*, 'tis no matter of moment to the Sheep under whose Conduct they are pastured.

You will say then, that 'tis *necessary* for a Christian to join in Communion with some Church, tho' 'tis no great matter what Church it be. If hereby you mean that 'tis *necessary* to join in all Christian Duties commanded in the Gospel of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, I readily own it; but all that I meant to say in the fore-going Period was, that there is no such distinguishing Mark in any particular Christian Church which could add any considerable Advantage to the Character of a good Christian, and for the sake whereof you will find it *necessary* to join your self in strict Communion therewith. But on the contrary 'tis sufficient for you to take the *New Testament* of our Lord for the whole and sole Rule of your Faith and Life. *St. John the Evangelist* has taught us, that his own Gospel alone is sufficient to conduct any Man to Heaven: For so he writes, *John 20. 31. These are written that ye might believe, and that believing ye might have Life through his Name.* And I think that it has been hitherto the Principle of all Protestants, that the holy *Scriptures* are able to *make a Man wise to Salvation.* 'Tis certain that the holy *Scriptures* teach us to love the Lord our God with all our Hearts, and our Neighbours as our selves, which is the fulfilling of the Law: And if you religiously practice these Duties, what *necessity* is there of any particular Church-Communion? If the holy *Scriptures* cannot convince you of these Duties, how shall the Church convince you? I suppose you make no doubt but that your Prayer, Praises and Devotions to God may be heard altho' they should be offered up in no publick Church-Form at all: And as for your Duties to your Neighbour, there is no Church-Form composed for the Practice of it. In short, a Man may love God and his Neighbour, tho' there were no Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, no Form of Prayer, Ceremony, or Church-Assembly in the World.

But then you will say, how shall you receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper without a Priest and a Church-Communion? Truly, you cannot perform that Duty, according to the present Custom, in any other way: But yet 'tis certain, that a Christian Family, or Neighbour-

Neighbourhood may take a solemn occasion to meet together on purpose to call to mind the kind Offices which *Jesus Christ* performed on the Cross for their Salvation; and this may be done with as hearty an Affection as if it were performed at a Church with the Assistance of a Priest and an Altar. I say, that Men may be religiously and devoutly disposed, and Bread and Wine may be decently and reverently used in such an Assembly. And if the Remembrance of our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, which is the end of this Institution, may be thus attained, no Church-Form can be thought to be absolutely necessary. This Sacrament (as 'tis now stiled) was celebrated at first by a Master to his Family, without any Priest to consecrate the Elements (as the phrase now runs.) Nor can I find, that the *Corinthians* had any Priest among them when they join'd their Suppers together upon this occasion, their fault was, that some of them were drunk before they arose from Table, 1 Cor. 11. 21.

But yet it will seem strange to your Ladyship, that the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper, which has been the Subject of almost numberless Books and voluminous Disputes, and which is esteem'd as the very Badge and Cognizance of a Christian, should contain no more in it than what is here represented. But notwithstanding whatsoever has been made of it in later Ages, at first there was no more designed by it than an affectionate Remembrance of our Lord and Saviour by the Signs of our Bread and Wine. *Jesus Christ* craved a Blessing, and brake the Bread, and distributed it together with the Wine among his Family, who ate and drank in Remembrance of him. But yet since the Primitive Simplicity of the Gospel grew out of Fashion, this plain Institution (by the Power of Priest-craft) grew up into such a Mystery, as is not only *above*, but *contrary* to all Sense and Reason. And whilst the *Popish* Priesthood amuse their People by the miraculous change which they make in the Elements, the *Protestant* Priests amuse their People no less with such a nice Preparation for the holy Table, as makes most Men abstain from thence for fear lest they should *eat and drink their own Damnation*: Whereas St. Paul only inform'd the *Corinthians*, that their converting the Lord's Supper into a drunken Debauch, was a very prophane Practice, and might be the occasion of that Sickness with which they were then visited, 1 Cor. 11. 30.

But since the Gospel-Simplicity has been worn off, the Priests of
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all Churches have agreed, 1st. That 'tis necessary for all *Christian* People to communicate at the Lord's Table. 2^{dly}, That this Sacrament cannot be rightly celebrated without the Assistance of a Priest, who must consecrate the *Elements* to the use for which they are designed; whereby the Priest is made absolutely necessary to the very *Being* of the Sacrament. The Priest also making himself Judge of every one's Preparation for this Sacrament, has it in his Power to admit to a Participation whom he thinks fit, as likewise to exclude whom he pleases from this necessary means of Salvation. And hereby he is enabled to make his terms with the People, who must be contented to save their Souls upon what conditions he will admit. No wonder then that so great a noise has been made concerning this sacred commemorative Repast.

That *Christian Communion* which you read of as practised in the Apostles Days, was nothing else but a religious Conversation of *Christians* one amongst another. 'Twas for Society sake that they went from House to House, that they ate and drank together frequently, that they discoursed to one another about the Doctrine and Life of their great Master; as you read, *Acts* 2. 42. &c. And our learned Interpreters of the holy Scriptures agree, that St. Paul speaks of this *Communion*, or religious sort of Intercourse in *Heb.* 10. 24, 25. where he saith, *Let us consider one another to provoke unto Love, and to good Works; not forsaking the assembling of our selves together.* I was saying that our Commentators take these words to signify no less than an Exhortation to avoid an Apostacy from the *Christian Communion* to the *Jewish Synagogue*, or *Gnostick Heresie*; particularly the Reverend Dr. *Whitby*, our latest and most learned Commentator, explains himself in this sense.

Now 'tis plain that this sort of religious Conversation may be kept up among *Christians* without either Priest or Altar, or any set Form of Prayer or Praise. 'Twas long after the Apostles were dead and buried before the Temples were built, and Altars erected, or set Orations were made to the People in Churches.

And what if you should farther consider, if there be any part of this *Primitive Church-Communion* which might not have been performed by a Woman as well as a Man. For there were some Women who followed *Christ* together with the Men, and saw what he did, and also heard what he said, as well as the Apostles. And if either of their
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Memories had serv'd them to relate to their Acquaintance what they had heard and seen, they had therein discharged the Office of an Apostle, which Office consisted in being a Witness of what *Christ* did ; but more particularly of his Resurrection: As you read that *Matthias* succeeded to the Office of *Judas*, to be a Witness of *Christ's* Resurrection, Acts 1. 22. And had either of these Women written a Narrative of what she had seen and heard concerning our Saviour *Christ*, that Narrative of hers had been part of the Gospel. And when the Primitive Christians met together to break Bread from House to House, had any of these Women craved a Blessing upon that Bread, we have no reason to doubt but that God would have heard her Prayer. This Primitive Communion of Christians was very needful for Men under their unfortunate Circumstances. For when the *Jews* and *Gentiles* were maliciously join'd together for their Destruction, 'twas high time for them to comfort with one another for mutual Admonition, Counsel, Comfort, or any sort of Assistance which Brethren in Affliction could give to one another: And the religious Conversation of good *Christians* may still be of use for their mutual Assistance, as their respective cases may require.

But perhaps your Ladyship inquir'd only concerning that sort of Church-Communion which is now in use in our Church-Assemblies ; and as to this point, no body can answer your Question so well as your self. For where you go to Church on the Lord's Day, or on Week Days to hear the divine Service performed by the Priest, you your self can best judge if all, or any part of it be needful or useful to you. I suppose that you make no doubt but that God heareth your private Prayers; neither is it to be doubted but that you may learn the Christian Faith from the New Testament: So that there is no *absolute necessity* for publick Church-Communion, since you can read the Gospel at home. But yet if the Parson of your Parish be a good Man, and a good Preacher, not only publick Communion, but private religious Conversation with him may be very profitable to you: Nay, it may so fall out, that his Advice and Assistance may be highly expedient, and in a manner necessary for you; but still your self will be the best Judge hereof. And if a Lay-Person should be as learned and wise as the Priest, 'tis all one whom you consult, if your occasions are equally answered by either of them.

But after all, it may be that the particular cases of spiritual Counsel

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and comfort were not in your Thoughts, when you asked me the Question, but you meant only in general to enquire whether it were not best for you to own your self a Member of some particular Church Communion or other. And truly, if a Man intends to pass his Life easily in any *Christian* Country, 'twill be necessary for him to own the Communion of that Church, which is in Fashion in that Country where he lives; for neither the Priesthood nor People will suffer him to live well with them upon any other Terms; and therefore, since your dwelling is in *England*, 'twill be highly expedient for you to joyn your self in publick Communion to the Church by Law established; for tho' you may satisfy your self in point of Conscience, that you carry a true Christian Heart always about you, yet this will not satisfy the World in such places where publick Church-Communion are highly in esteem, and where each Party is very zealous to promote their particular Communion. In such a case, *meer Christians*, tho' ever so good, are esteem'd as Neuters if not Enemies, by each particular Church Communion, inso-much that if our Saviour *Jesus Christ* were now upon Earth, and appeared in all Circumstances of his Life in the same manner as we read of him in the Gospel: 'twould be hard to find such a Church now in being, as would heartily receive him into her Bosom. The *Papists* would not own him, unless he would own the *Pope's* Supremacy, which was never heard of him in his Days: Unless he were very well affected to *Bishops and Ceremonies*, he would find little Favour in the Eyes of the *English Clergy*; and unless he hated *Bishops, and Ceremonies*, the *Scottish Clergy* would certainly hate him. And I am of Opinion, that he would please neither Church-Party. Perhaps no wise Man was ever very *Zealous* either for, or against *indifferent* things.

And for this Reason, I doubt that you will not think it necessary to be a zealous Member of any Communion; having also heard your Ladyship say, that Church Communion have lately served to promote the Interest of Parties, and particularly, the Dominion of the Clergy over the People; which Clergy-Interest (as you observ'd) could not be comply'd with, but by abdicating the common Interest of Mankind. I remember that you were offended at the very Names of *Communion* and *Religion*, as tending to enslave Mankind, for (said you) in *Italy* Submission to the Pope is call'd *Communion*;
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in *England*, a Submission to the Power of Bishops; in *Scotland*, Obedience to the Presbyters is call'd *Communion*. Nay, this is oftentimes stiled (as you complained) by the sacred Name of Religion. As if you asked this Question, what Religion are you of? I am a *Roman Catholick*, says one; I am a *Church-of-England-Man*, says another; I am a *Presbyterian*, says a third. And this put you in Mind of an ancient Custom formerly in use with the Lord Mayors of *London*, who were wont to bestow a party coloured Coat upon some poor crack-brain'd Creature, who was fed with the meaner Servants of the Houshold, and call'd the *Lord Mayor's Fool*. His Office was to walk about the Dining-room, and entertain the Guests before Dinner was set upon the Table; now it hapned that a certain Person dressed in a Scarlet Coat with Gold Lace, meeting this Officer, ask'd him, *whose Fool are you?* to whom he reply'd *I am my Lord Mayor's Fool, pray ye whose Fool are you?*

Now to apply your Ladyship's Story to your self, altho' it be not necessary to be either the Pope's, the Bishop's, or the Presbyter's Fool, yet it may be convenient to make some one of these Church-Parties believe that you are so; for else all these Parties will joyn together against you. Be sure that they will all look askant at you as at a meer *Morocco-Christian*, altho' you were the best Woman in the World. And 'tis well if they do not use you, as *Taffalet* us'd the *Moors*, who tormented them for his Diversion.

Let us now, if you please look back, and take a view of what has been said already, it comes only to this, viz. tho' Church-Communion be not absolutely necessary to make a good *Christian*, yet 'tis highly conducing to the ease and quiet of a Man's Life, to join himself in Communion to some particular Church.

But, tho' Dissimulation has been allowed upon a reasonable Occasion, by some learned Divines; as when King *David* feigned himself mad to avoid being discover'd in the Court of King *Achish*, as you read 1 *Sam.* 21. 10. and tho' the *Sieur Pufendorf*, one of the greatest Moralists which this Age has produced, allows a Man to use Dissimulation for his own advantage, when it can thereby be attained without detriment to any other Person, yet I cannot think a constant Dissimulation in the matter of religious Worship to be allowable, or advisable in any case. I pity at my Heart the present Condition of the *Protestants in France*, who by the Tyranny of that wretched
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King of theirs are forced to go constantly to *Mass*, in Opposition to the dictates of Conscience. I pity them heartily, but cannot tell how to excuse them; much less would I advise any such thing. And therefore, when I advised you to join your self in Communion to some particular Christian Church, for your own quiet, I did not mean that you should do this contrary to your Conscience, but according to your Persuasion; and therefore, were I worthy to be heard, I would desire your Ladyship fairly to examine only the several Doctrines, and Ways of Worship, which are now in use among the several Protestant Communions in *England*; for to examine the several Persuasions of Foreign Protestants is to little purpose, since you will confine your self to your Native Country.

But then you will ask, how shall you examine all the Articles of the several Protestant Communions in *England*, since several of them have formed no Articles of Agreement among themselves, tho' they all hold one common Article of Disagreement from the Church of *England*? And truly, I cannot tell how you can distinguish these Church-Parties from one another, unless by hearing their Preachers Sermons. And then, if you go to their several Meetings, perhaps you will observe no Difference as to the Substance of their Doctrines, it being the same which is commonly preached in our Churches, as to the Matter of Christian Faith and Practice; but yet you will find much Difference as to their Phrase and Manner of expressing themselves; so that perhaps by this expedient you will not as yet find any great Reason to prefer one Communion before another, only you may chance to like the Style and Behaviour of one Preacher better than of another.

Supposing then, that all the English Protestant Communions do agree as to the necessary Points of *Christian* Faith and Morals, a good Man may joyn himself to any of them. But still where there is Variety every one is willing to chuse for the best; and if I might assist your choice, I would direct your Ladyship to the Communion of the Church of *England*.

First, because that Establishment is most agreeable to the Laws of the Land, and to the Genius of the People; who by long use, have learned to submit to the Authority of Bishops. 'Tis true that there is as yet a Toleration established by Law; so that if you should see cause to dissent from the Church, you may enjoy the Benefit thereof. But

But the Church has this Advantage above all other Parties of Protestants, *viz.* that her Articles of Agreement, her Homilies, and her Forms of Divine Worship lie open to the view of all People; and if in those Authentick Books of the Church you shall find no Doctrine or part of Worship disagreeable to the Rule of *Christ*, (and I verily believe you will find no such thing there) then you will have good Reason to join in Communion with the Church; whereas if you join to *any other* Congregation, you will in so doing join your self (by an implicit Faith) to a Preacher, rather than (with understanding) to a Church; because that as yet Articles of Agreement, Forms of publick Worship, and Homilies are wanting to all the dissenting Congregations, which therefore are formed only upon this Principle, *viz.* *We approve of Mr. H--'s way of praying and preaching, and therefore, we will join our selves to his Congregation.* And now I will leave it to your Consideration whether you will join in Communion with the Church, upon mature Deliberation upon all her Doctrines, and Forms of publick Worship; or else with a Priest, all whose Doctrines are not fore-knownn to you, and whose way of Worship cannot be preconsider'd by you.

As to particular Objections against the Priest of the Church, I remember your Ladyship blamed them for endeavouring to enslave their Country, by the Traiterous Doctrine of *Non-resistance*; as also because they shew'd too much of a *persecuting Spirit against their Protestant Brethren who embraced not their Communion.* But tho' this Objection be allowed, I cannot see how from the Immoralities of some Priests you can draw sufficient Reason against your communicating with the Church; because the Errours and Vices of the Priest do not infect the wholsom Doctrines and holy Devotions of the Church, any more than the Treachery of *Judas*, did cast any Disparagement upon the last Supper of *Jesus Christ*. Suppose the Reader of your Parish should have taken a Glas of Claret too liberally the last Night, the Morning Prayer of this Day would be never the worse upon that Account: you are to consider your self as in Communion with a regulated Church, not with a Priest only; so that should your Priest fall into any Error of Life or Doctrine, your Church is not thereby become erroneous. As for dissenting Congregations, who have no declar'd Articles and Forms of Worship, they seem to be in Communion only with the Priest; and therefore your Objection would affect them in
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another manner than it affects the *Church of England*: And this I have said only in a general way to your Objections.

As to the particular Point of *Non-resistance*, I take it to be a *Traitorous* Doctrine here in *England*, where we have Rights and Liberties of our own, which are not at the King's Disposal; yet if this Passive Obedience be the real Doctrine of the *Church of England*, declared fully in her Book of Homilies, I think that her Priests who are bred up rather to *believe* than *examine*, rather to depend upon the *Authority of the Church*, than to *follow the Dictates of their Reason*; I was saying that the Priests may be excused for preaching this Doctrine, especially when they were tempted to it by the Court, and were ignorant of the design of their Tempter.

And now I will refer it to your Ladyship's severe Judgment, if the Doctrine of the Church, as it is contained in the Book of Homilies, do's not evidently justify the Doctrine of *Non-resistance*, which the Priesthood so zealously promoted in the late Reigns; to which purpose I will transcribe out of the Book of Homilies, as followeth. *Here let us mark well, and remember that the high Power of Kings, with their making of Laws, Judgments, and Offices, are the Ordinances, not of Man but of God; the higher Powers be set in Authority by God. They be God's Lieutenants, God's Presidents, God's Officers, God's Judges, ordained of God himself, of whom only they have all their Power and all their Authority, as is declared in the first part of the Sermon of Obedience. And in the second Part of the same Sermon, 'tis thus written. Christ taught us plainly, that even the wicked Rulers have their Power and Authority from God. And therefore it is not lawful for their Subjects to withstand them, altho' they abuse their Power. And a little farther, where the case is put, What if a King shall command any thing contrary to God's Commandments? 'Tis thus resolved; In such a case we may not in any wise make any Insurrection, Sedition or Tumult, either by force of Arms, or any other way against the anointed of the Lord, or any of his Officers; but we must in such case suffer patiently all Wrongs and Injuries, referring the Judgment of our Cause only to God. And in the first Part of the Sermon against wilful Rebellion, 'tis thus written. What shall Subjects do then? shall they obey valiant, wise, stout and good Princes, and condemn, disobey, and rebel against Children being their Princes, and against indiscreet and evil Governours? God forbid, for what a per-*
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willous thing were it to commit unto the Subjects the Judgment, which Prince is wise and godly and his Government good, and which is otherwise? as tho' the Foot must judge the Head, an enterprise very heinous. And a little after, this Question is put. But what if the Prince be indiscreet and evil indeed, and it is also evident to all Men's Eyes that he is so? This Question is resolved by another in these following words. I ask again, what if it be long of the wickedness of the Subjects that the Prince is indiscreet and evil? shall the Subjects both by their wickedness provoke God for their deserved Punishment, to give them an indiscreet and evil Prince, and also rebel against him and against God; who for the Punishment of their Sins do's give them such a Prince? And a little farther 'tis ask'd, Shall we not rise against our known mortal and deadly Enemy that seeketh our Lives? and the Answer is No?

Since then that Passive Obedience to a Tyrant was once the Doctrine of the Church by Law established, I cannot think the Priesthood to be inexcusable for preaching up that Doctrine, altho' the People had been inexcusable if they had not taken the Liberty to examine it, and to believe or disbelieve it as they saw Cause. 'Tis true, the late happy Revolution being established by Law, has by Consequence null'd the former Establishment of this pernicious Doctrine; so that tho' it is still to be read in the Homilies, yet it can be no part of the Religion now by Law Established, nor are the Clergy now any longer bound to avow it notwithstanding their Subscriptions. For if the Laws and Constitution of a whole Nation shall be subjected to change, the Church-Constitutions which have their Establishment from those Laws, must be subject to the same Mutations.

Besides, I cannot believe that your Ladyship thinks any Church to be infallible; nor do's any Person who embraces the Communion of the *English Church* perfectly resign up himself to an implicit Faith in her Doctrine any more than if you take a Guide in your Journey, you intend to debar your self from the use of your own Eyes. It may be you will say that every one should carefully consider all these things before he chooseth his particular Communion; but alas! most Men are by their Parents and Relations bred up in their particular Communion, before they are capable of forming a nice Judgment hereupon. And suppose that upon a serious Consideration you should approve of the Doctrines, Devotions and Ceremonies of our Church, 'tis possible

possible that you may grow wiser by Age, and spy out a small Fault which you could not at first discover. What then? are you bound therefore to forsake the Church's Communion upon that Account? Surely such a strictness of behaviour is no ways agreeable to the imperfect State of this World; where the best Man is he who has the fewest Faults, and the best Church that which has the fewest Errours.

But if none must be owned as Members of our Church but they who have carefully consider'd all her Doctrines and Forms of Worship, I doubt that the Church will be able to number but few Communicants. Whether the Clergy weigh all these Matters before they are admitted into holy Orders is a doubtful Matter, but the Laity commonly follow the bent of their Education, and take their Churches upon content.

And indeed, to refuse the Communion of an established Church upon dislike of some particular Doctrine or Practice which is not of great Moment, can proceed only from a peevish and Schismatical temper of Mind. Supposing I were of the Presbyterian Persuasion, viz. that the Authority which our Bishop executes in a Diocese, ought to be executed by a *Committee of Priests*; what Pretence can I take from thence to refuse my personal Presence at the reading of the Common Prayer, or at the common preachings of the Clergy of the Church. Suppose that I were convinced that there is neither precept nor precedent for Infant-Baptism to be found in the Scripture, why should this Opinion fright me from joyning with the Church in her Morning and Evening Prayer? 'Tis true, I would not be God-father at a Christning, nor bear any part in the Baptism of an Infant; but if such a one be brought to the Church whilst I am there at Divine Service; and supposing the Parson after having read the second Lesson goes to the Font to Christen this Child; I can see no Reason I shall have to run out of the Church, tho' I cannot joyn in that particular Office, when I can heartily joyn in all the other Parts of Divine Service which is there celebrated.

And why, must I forsake the Communion of any Church because I find Fault with one or two of her Doctrines? For 'tis possible that I may be mistaken as to those Points; howbeit if those Doctrines be false and I know 'em to be so, they can have no Influence upon me to do me any hurt; and I know your Ladyship's Sense of the
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Matter I have been writing upon so well, that the Doctrine of *Non-resistance*, and the Doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings, which is the support of the Former, tho' ever so much enforced in the Homilies will never withdraw your Ladyship's Allegiance or Affection from our gracious Sovereign Lady *Queen Ann*, with whom you have been more particularly acquainted than with the Church's Homilies.

Besides, you need not be much afraid of hearing the *Passive Doctrine* preached up in these Days: since the former Preachers thereof at last grew weary of it, and not only suffered themselves to be *Passive* in the late happy Revolution, but were so *Active* as to swear Allegiance to his late Majesty *King William III.* Now these things are inconsistent with *Non resistance and jure Divino*; so that you cannot be supposed to meet with any Clergy-men of so shallow a Penetration as to adhere to those *out-dated Opinions*. And to say the worst of this Matter, what if some Priests heretofore preached up these Doctrines to gain Preferment from Court, or to render the Dissenters odious for want of Church Loyalty? The former Immoralities of some Clergy-men are not a sufficient Reason to prevent your Communion with any Christian Church: A Separation from whence upon dislike of a Doctrine sometimes preached by her Priests, or upon account of a Ceremony or Expression somewhere used in her Offices, had never any Pretence (as I could see) either from Reason or Religion to make it good.

As to the second particular of your Ladyship's Objection against the persecuting Spirit of the Priests, I take it for granted that neither you or I shall answer for their Faults; let them be as hot as they will, we may be as cool as we please; while they hate their Friends, we may love our Enemies. All Communions may have some ill Men among them, there was a *Judas* among the twelve; must we therefore reject the Gospel? all Men have their Failings: must we therefore run from among Mankind, and live in a Desert.

But, I remember that your Ladyship had one scruple more which perplexed you about the *Athanasian Creed*, which you said was extremely Mysterious; and at the same time I remember you told me that you very much liked a certain Book which you had lately read, call'd *Christianity not Mysterious*. And I must own to your Ladyship as touching that Book, it shews its Writer to be a Man of Let-

ters, and of great Vivacity of Wit. But then, Experience shews us that a Man may have a great deal of Wit, and at the same time be ignorant of very common things, and this was the Case of Mr. Toland when he was drawn into the Delusion of writing that Book. Had he but recollected in his Thoughts those Doctrines which make up the Scheme of our Salvation by *Jesus Christ*, he must of meer Necessity have seen that every one of those Doctrines had been *Mysterious*. For,

First, is not the Doctrine of our *Redemption* by our Lord *Jesus Christ* grounded upon our *Fall* in *Adam*? Had there been no *Fall* there had been no need of a *Redemption*; and is it not a *Mysterious* thing that all Mankind should be *born Vessels of God's Wrath*, because *Adam* and *Eve* ate the Fruit of a certain Tree which they should not have medled with? Is it not *Mysterious* that God should not forgive this Original, or any other actual Transgression (when repented of) *Freely*, but he must have his Justice fully satisfied before he would Pardon? Is it not *Mysterious* that God's Justice should at last be satisfy'd with the sufferings of an *Innocent Person* instead of the Punishment of those who were *Guilty*? Can Mr. Toland Fathom these *Mysteries*, or are they not at least *above* his Reason? And from this Consideration it was that I always laugh at the *Socinians*, for rejecting the *Athanasian Creed*, for being *Mysterious*, when the whole Scheme of our Redemption (which they believe) is such, and particularly their Article of *Deus factus*, i. e. a *God made*, is no less a *Mystery* than that three Almighty's should be no more than one Almighty, or that a God, and a God and a God, should be no more than one God. Now as to the particular Opinion of St. *Athanasius*, viz. that all shall be damn'd who do not believe his Creed, I suppose that a Man may be a good Church-man tho' he should differ from the Saint in that Point. And what if St. *Athanasius* or any other great Man should differ in Opinion from you or me, must we therefore leave the Communion of the Church of *England*? God forbid.

I remember but one thing more which I perceived your Ladyship to dislike in the Church Doctrine, which was the 17. Article concerning *Predestination*; but this Doctrine is of late Years so much grown out of Fashion, that if a Man cannot be a Church-man without believing it, few Bishops or Clergy-men can be reckon'd of the Church-Communion. I remember that you would not endure to hear the

the *Arminian* Interpretation of that Article, such an Interpretation, you said, was all Collusions: for (said you) a Man may interpret *black* to signify *white*, as well as he may interpret that Article to an *Arminian* Sense. And in that particular I am of your Opinion, I mean, as to taking that Article in an *Arminian* Sense; but then I believe that Article to contain a true Doctrine in the plain Sense of the words. The Doctrine of *Predestination* (as to me it seems) is plainly revealed in the *New Testament*; and therefore I shall believe it tho' the *Arminians* bring out a hundred Texts of Scripture which I cannot reconcile to it. 'Tis indeed a *Mysterious Doctrine*, and it would cease to be such if I could fathom it by the short Line of my Reason.

And therefore, notwithstanding the Doctrine of *Predestination* has of late Years been ridiculed by some of the Clergy themselves under the Notion of *Calvinism*, were I worthy to advise your Ladyship, I would in a particular manner recommend this Doctrine of the Church to your serious perusal, and I doubt not but that you will find it sufficiently justify'd by the Writings of the *Evangelists* and *Apostles*, particularly by St. Paul in *Rom. 9*.

And even in St. *Austin's* time the Scheme of our Redemption by our Saviour *Jesus Christ* stood thus, viz. " Almighty God having
" considered the fall of Mankind in *Adam*, and consulted his Infinite
" Wisdom thereupon, he found out a way to gratify his Mercy by
" giving a full Satisfaction to his Justice, in behalf of all those whom
" he was pleased to elect freely to Salvation. And this he did effect
" by sending his Son *Jesus Christ* to suffer such Punishment for them
" as should be sufficient and effectual, not only to procure the Par-
" don of their Sins, but also such a Measure of Grace as should
" sanctify their corrupt Natures, and prepare their Souls for Heaven.

Your Ladyship will perceive that if this antient Scheme of our Redemption by *Jesus Christ* our Lord had been constantly preserved and held in esteem, not one single point of *Socinianism* could have entered upon us. For who could satisfy God's Infinite Justice but God himself, whose Merit alone is capable of being infinite? So that hereby our Redeemer could not have been esteem'd any thing less than God incarnate, the second Person in the blessed Trinity, and the Graces of God could only be the purchase of his most precious Blood.

It so fell out, *Madam*, that this old Scheme of Theology was first
disturbed

disturbed by a *British Monk*, whom the *Latin Writers* call'd *Pelagius*. I suppose his Name was *Morgan*, for *Mor*, in the *British Tongue*, signifies *Pelagus* i. e. the Sea, and *Morgan* answers to *Pelagius*, i. e. Sea-faring or belonging to the Sea. Now this *Monk*, about the Year of our Lord, 405. preached in *Britain* these Doctrines. 1st. That, Mankind is not so bad but that still he has a Free-will whereby to do good as well as evil. 2^{dly}, That, by the use of that free Power he may render himself acceptable to God, by his sincere perseverance in a virtuous Life. 3^{dly}. That, there was no such thing as Original Sin, sticking to Infants in their Births; so that Baptism of Infants to wash it away was not needful, and 4^{thly}. That the Church-Prayers for the Conversion of *Infidels*, or for the Progress of *Christians* in Grace are needless, since 'tis only in our own Power to render our selves either virtuous or vitious. That these were the Doctrines of *Pelagius* we learn from St. *Austin* who strenuously opposed them, and also from the first general Council of *Carthage* which condemned them, A. D. 423.

'Tis strange to observe how long any sort of Doctrine will preserve it self, and sometimes rise out of Oblivion, after it has once been taught under the Notion of Religion! *Zoroaster* is thought to have been contemporary with *Moses*, and he taught the *Persians* that there were two Co-ordinate supreme Rulers of this World; the one being the supreme Fountain of good, the other of evil. And 'tis wonderful to read how that *Manes Manicheus* a *Persian* should revive this obsolete Opinion in the Year of our Lord, 273. as St. *Austin* also has informed us; so that this Opinion has ever since been known by the Name of the *Manichean Heresy*. In like manner the *Pelagian Heresy* has of late Years been revived in great *Britain*, where it has had very great and eminent Men to trim it up and adorn it by their Writings, so that now, notwithstanding the Articles of the Church are against it, it is call'd Rational Theology, but the proper Name of it is *Arminianism*, which contains this System, viz. " There was
 " never any such thing as *Predestination and Election of Individual Per-*
 " *sons* out of the Mass of Mankind, for whose sake alone God sent
 " his Son into the World to suffer Death; nor was there any *abso-*
 " *lute necessity* for God to send *Jesus Christ* to die for Sinners; but
 " he might have forgiven poor penitent Sinners, without requiring
 " Satisfaction to his Justice, had he so been pleased to do, as a
 " good

“ good Man may *freely* forgive an Offence committed against him-
 “ self without any Diminution to his Justice, or any of his Virtues.
 “ This System farther imports, that notwithstanding the Fall in *A-*
 “ *dam*, Men find by Experience that they have a Power of doing
 “ good as well as evil; which Power being exerted according to the
 “ Gospel-Rule will recommend a Man to the Mercy of God, thro’
 “ the Oblation which *Jesus Christ* made to the eternal Father. Now
 if these *Arminian* Premises be allowed, ’twill be hard to stave off
 a *Socinian* Conclusion. For the *Socinians* will say,

If there were *no Necessity* to satisfy God’s infinite Justice, then
 there was *no Necessity* that our Redeemer should be *God by Nature*;
 since a Man might in an extraordinary way have been qualified, and
 also accepted for a Mediatour; so that hereupon the Incarnation
 of the second Person of the holy Trinity was not necessary. But tho’
 God be not wont to do needless things, yet it might be very necessa-
 for us, say they, that God should send a *Messenger* from Heaven to
 teach us the means of Salvation, and to set us a Pattern, as well as
 give us a Precept therefore. Now what shall be reply’d to this?
 Why! Who would have thought that *Arminian* Premises should
 have inferr’d a *Socinian* Conclusion? As one may say in another like
 case, who would have thought that the *Cartesian* Philosophy, which
 admits of nothing in the Universe but Matter and Motion, should have
 gratify’d the *Socinians* by excluding the third Person of the holy
 Trinity for being an *immaterial Spirit*? But it was plain Matter of
 Fact, that when *Arminianism* had gain’d Ground in *Holland*, *Soci-*
nianism soon followed it. ’Tis likewise as plain Matter of Fact,
 that the Clergy of the Church of *England* since the time of Arch-
 Bishop *Laud*, have both preached up and frequently printed the
Arminian Scheme in *England*, and that *Socinianism* has ensued; but
 yet the dissenting Congregations, who notwithstanding their dissent
 from us in many things, hold fast to the Doctrine of *Predestination*,
 are still free from all Suspicion of *Socinianism*.

Your Ladyship sees then the Reason, why I have recommended
 the Doctrine contained in the 17th Article of our Church to your
 serious Examination: For, tho’ I do not think any particular Com-
 munion absolutely necessary for you, yet I think it needful for you to
 be a good Christian. But *Arminianism* was a Shooting horn to draw
 on *Socinianism*, and that draws after it *Deism*.

As for the Common-Prayer-Book, I believe you will not find any unbecoming Petition, or undecent Expression in the whole Texture of it. And if a Form of Prayer be so contrived as to raise good Desires in our Hearts, it answers the end for which it was made. For good Meditations frequently received into our Minds are the proper Means to bring our Hearts into a right Disposition towards God and Man, and also to fix them in it. And I think that the daily Office of the Church, as well as the other occasional Offices, are (at least) as well fitted to this great end, as any other Forms I have ever read, or any other Method of conceived Prayer as I have ever heard.

Another Reason, I would urge to persuade your Ladyship to the Church-Communion, is because the People of that Communion are more easy and affable in Conversation than generally the Dissenters are; who are commonly more stiff and cautious, and sometimes too censorious. I speak this, not to reproach them, but to warn you. God knows how that I heartily pitied them when they lay under the Lash of the Law, which was sufficient to sower their Tempers; and tho' at present they enjoy a Toleration, which is the Ornament of her Majesties gracious Reign, as well as a good Security to her Crown, yet no body knows how soon this just Liberty may be recalled; and as yet that roughness of Temper which arose from their former Persecution is not wholly smoothed off. Besides, the Priests of the Church must of Necessity be better Preachers than the generality of the Dissenters, as having the Privilege of our Universities for their Education, which is deny'd to those who will not conform. 'Tis true that our Clergy's preaching has of late been a little too rational, especially as to the *Arminian* Points; but, then the Dissenters Sermons are frequently too mystical.

Perhaps it may be worth your while to consider, that we live in a Climate Subject to very different changes of Weather, and likewise that we are a People subject to frequent changes of Mind and Disposition; hereby we are made subject to fall into Parties, and when we are divided 'tis hard to unite us again. Now in such a case as this, 'tis best to be of the strongest Party, which is certainly the Church-Party. And tho' it must be confess'd that the Christian Doctrine do's Discountenance all sorts of Divisions and Party-taking among its Professours, requiring all Christians to love as Brethren, and to join together as Limbs of the same Body, which are influenced by one and
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the same Head; having all of 'em the same Faith, and Hope, and Rule of Life, in loving their Neighbours as themselves; yet since *Christians*, in spite of their Profession, and to the Scandal of their great Name, will divide from one another, 'tis good to be of the strongest Division; not by Virtue thereof to injure the weaker Party, but the better to preserve your self. I am,

M A D A M,

Your Ladyship's most humble Servant;

P O S T S C R I P T.

AS to your second Question concerning *Orthodoxy of Belief*, it is a subject so very much entangled, that it will take up a considerable time to unravel it. Otherwise, (it may be) 'twere enough to say that he who knows how to govern his Tongue, may with the same ease guide his Belief aright. As for Instance, a wise Man should have a *Reason* for speaking before he speaketh; but if he hath *no Reason* for speaking, even that is a sufficient Cause, why he should hold his Peace. So should you have a *Reason* for believing, before you believe any thing; but if you have *no Reason* for believing, even that is a *sufficient Cause* for you to assign for your not believing. Faith and Truth amongst Men are Graces of inestimable Value, but *Credulity*, as yet hath not found a place in your Catalogue of Moral Virtues.

Not that I think a Man credulous who takes up his Faith in some Measure upon human Authority; for we are so bred up as that we cannot do otherwise, nor can we admit of any other Education. The first Lesson which every Child is taught, is Obedience to his Parents or Guardians; and hence like fair Paper he takes in such Impressions as are given him in his early Education. After this, our Schoolmasters and Tutours form our Minds by their Examples and Precepts; and all this while the Parish-Priest, whom we are bound to hear with Attention, instils his Creed into us; first, by Catechising, and always by Preaching; so that every ones Education subjects him in great Measure to human Authority.

Nor is it possible in the Nature of the thing, that even *Revealed Religion* can subsist without some dependance upon *humane Authority*. For the *Christian Religion* subsists as to its Authority upon Matters
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of Fact, which were originally testify'd by Men. As the four Gospels are the Testimonies of four Men, concerning the Words and Actions of our Saviour *Christ*. As for the Names of the four Evangelists, and that they were indeed the Apostles of *Christ*, we learn from antient Writers; and that these four Narratives which we call Gospels are genuine and original Writings, and not Romances forged in the Apostle's Names, we learn from the Authority of the Clergy assembled at *Laodicea*; in which Council it was agreed that the Books of the New Testament were genuine and authentick Records, A. D. 164.

Now, that these original Writings were truly transcrib'd, and honestly handed down from one Generation to another, and so without any Variation have come to our Hands, depends much upon the Care and Diligence of *Transcribers*; and that even these Copies have been rightly rendered into the *English* Tongue is a matter wholly depending upon the Abilities and Faithfulness of the *Translatours*.

Perhaps you will say, if this be so, then instead of believing in God, you can only believe in those Men who translated the *Bible* into *English*. Not so neither, for you are not bound to believe our *English Translation*, any otherwise than as you shall see Cause so to do; for if you shall read any thing in our Translation which tends to support any concept unworthy of God, or any immoral Practice between Man and Man, you will have sufficient Reason to believe the *Translation to be false*; because you know that the true Word of God can favour no such Design. Or if hereupon you were satisfy'd that the Translation were true yet you would have just Reason to suspect that the original Copy had been corrupted by the mistake of some *Transcriber*; since you are certain that the word of God can encourage no sort of evil; so that at last you will find your self obliged to receive the *English Bible* not upon the bare Authority of the Translators, or of those who copied it from the Original; but from your own mature Deliberation upon the Matters contain'd in it, so that if upon your serious perusal, you find that it tends to give honourable Notions of the Deity, and very good Rules of Life, you may take it upon content for the word of God, altho' you can not make out by proof who was the Writer of any one Book contained in the sacred Volume.

Perhaps you will ask, What is then the difference between a Pa-
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pist and a Protestant, Since we must all trust out so much of our Religion to humane Authority? In answer to which Question, I think it may be proper to consider, first wherein Papists and Protestants agree; by which we shall be able to judge the better of their Differences. Now both Parties agree that the holy Bible is the Rule of their Faith and Manners; but they differ in this, that the Papists trust to the Authority of the *Roman* Clergy (whom in this case they call the Catholick Church) for the Interpretation of the holy Scriptures; whereas the Protestant truly reformed from Popery, trusts finally to his own Judgment as to the Interpretation of Scripture for his own use.

For supposing otherwise, that you hold your self obliged to follow the Sense of the *English* or *Dutch* Clergy in either of their Interpretations of the Bible, herein you are not reformed from Popery; all that can be said is that in this case, 'tis not *Italian*, but *English* or *Dutch* Popery which pleaseth you best. And supposing a *Roman Catholick* should leave the Communion of that Church, and oblige himself to receive the Sense of the *English* or *Dutch* Clergy in Matters of Faith and Practice, such a one has only changed his former *Species* of Popery, and is now another sort of a *Papist*.

Yet I would not have your Ladyship think, that the Writings or Preachings of the *Protestant Clergy* are by this Notion rendered useless and of none effect; for tho' by the Principle of a Protestant thoroughly reformed from Popery, your self will be the only final Judge of all Matters relating to your own Faith and Morals, yet if you will make a right Judgment hereupon for your own use, 'twill be very useful for you to get all the Helps you can, whereby to enable you to determine rightly of these Matters. Upon which Account the Labours of our Divines (who are at least as learned and able in that Profession as any in the Christian World) will be very fit for your perusal, altho' their Authority may not supercede your diligent and discreet Inquiry. And thus as a Protestant thoroughly reform'd from Popery, you will find your self obliged to take the holy Scriptures for a compleat Rule of your Faith and Practice, and you your own self, with what help you can get, for the final Interpreter of those sacred Volumes for your own personal use and behoof.

And this was the Sense of Mr. Chillingworth, in his famous De-
 fence of the Protestant Religion against Popery: wherein he saith
 thus I am fully assured that God doth not, and therefore, that
 Man ought not to receive any more of any Man, than this: To
 believe the Scriptures to be God's word, to endeavour to find the
 true sense, and to live according to it. The Bible, the Bible,
 only is, the Religion of Protestants. **Chil. Rel. of**
Chap. 6. Number 36.

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